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THE  
WIDENER MEMORIAL INDUSTRIAL  
TRAINING SCHOOL FOR  
CRIPPLED CHILDREN

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A BRICOT PINE

Widener Memorial Industrial School  
for Crippled Children.

GROUNDS—LOOKING NORTH.



E. A. WRIGHT PHILA.

Administration Building.

Main Building.

WIDENER MEMORIAL INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN.

Cottages—Looking Southwest.

# The Widener Memorial Industrial Training School for Crippled Children

By DE FOREST WILLARD, M.D., and A. BRUCE GILL, M.D.

THE Widener Memorial Industrial Training School for Crippled Children was founded by Mr. P. A. B. Widener as a memorial to his wife, Josephine, and their son, Harry K.

Mr. Widener's attention had been directed some years previous to the condition of crippled children, to their need of assistance in their efforts to become useful and self-supporting members of society, and to their great susceptibility to improvement under proper surgical, mechanical and educational treatment. In consequence he felt a strong desire to do something to aid these children in America, and especially those in the City of Philadelphia.

In this desire and intention he was strongly supported by Mrs. Widener, a woman of superior culture, goodness and benevolence. After her death, the desire to put into operation their mutual plans for these helpless little ones, was only increased by the fact that the institution that he should found would now be a lasting memorial to a good and noble woman.

In company with his physician, Dr. T. J. Yarrow, he consulted with Dr. De Forest Willard, Professor of Orthopædic Surgery in the University of Pennsylvania, concerning the form his benefaction should take in order best to accomplish his purposes. Dr. Willard heard Mr. Widener's propositions with the liveliest pleasure and interest, because for many years he had cherished a hope that he might see erected and maintained an institution for crippled children, where they should receive the best surgical and medical attention, to cure or correct as far as possible, their weakness and deformity, and where they should be educated and taught a trade whereby they might become self-maintaining and self-respecting citizens of the State.

The old Rogers' property, situated within the corporate limits of Philadelphia, at the intersection of North Broad Street, Old York Road and Olney Avenue, was purchased in 1899. On this plot of ground, consisting of thirty acres, was begun, in April,

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1902, the erection of the buildings that were completed and dedicated on March 3, 1906. The grounds and buildings cost \$1,000,000, and the school has been endowed with \$3,000,000 in order that its perpetuity may be insured. Mr. George D. Widener, a son of the founder, has given to the School from its very beginning his close personal supervision.

The buildings, designed by Mr. Horace Trumbauer, with suggestions as to detail made by Dr. Willard, are a beautiful example of the Colonial style of architecture.

The large central hospital building is for the care and treatment of the children until they have attained such improvement and reached such an age that they may be transferred to the cottages. It contains wards with contiguous solaria, operating suite, surgical dressing rooms, photographic and X-ray departments, gymnasium, dentist's room, general offices, dining-rooms and kitchens.

Two smaller buildings, cottages for the older children, are situated at the north corners of the main building, and are connected with it and with each other by glass enclosed passageways. Two similar ones, the Home for Nurses and the Industrial Building, are situated to the south.

The Isolation Ward and the houses for the chief engineer and the head gardener are on different parts of the grounds, but are in uniform style of architecture with the buildings already described.

The grounds comprise woodland, vegetable gardens, playgrounds, terraces, and lawns adorned with flowers and shrubs.

Children are admitted to the Widener School free of any charge and without distinction as to creed, nationality, or sex, but subject to the following requirements:—

1. First choice is given to children residing in Philadelphia, second choice to children residing in Pennsylvania outside of Philadelphia, and third choice to those from other States.

2. On admission children must be between the ages of four and ten years.

3. Parents or guardian must sign an indenture binding the child over to the Trustees of the institution until it shall reach its majority.

4. Children must be of good mental power; feeble-minded or backward subjects are not eligible.



5. The child must be a permanent cripple as a result of disease and not of accident, yet giving promise of improvement under treatment. A child that does not present evidence that it could become at least partially self-supporting, is ineligible.

On admission, children are detained from two to three weeks in the Isolation Ward, in order to prevent their carrying infection into the school. Thence they are transferred to the hospital department, where they are given surgical, mechanical and hygienic treatment until every possible improvement in their condition has been rendered, regardless of the time required. Many of the apparently helpless and hopeless victims of the deformities following infantile spinal paralysis and tuberculous joint diseases are partially or wholly restored to good or fair walking condition. This is accomplished through one or more of the following measures of treatment. Surgical operations are performed, calculated to correct deformities and to give the child the best possible use of the limbs. Apparatus and braces, all manufactured in the industrial department of the school, are designed to suit each individual case, giving support to weakened limbs and permitting locomotion. Massage and electricity have their place; and active and passive exercises in the well-equipped gymnasium, under a competent instructor, and according to the definite prescriptions of the medical officers, give increased muscular power and movement.

The best hygienic conditions prevail in an abundance of sunlight and fresh air and in a full supply of nutritious food. Definite and regular hours for work, recreation, sleeping, and eating and habits of personal cleanliness are taught. Much time is spent in the open air where an out-door gymnasium and broad playgrounds tempt in summer to exercise and amusement, and where a large asphalted plateau with adjoining glass-covered pavilions furnishes a winter playground always dry and free from snow. Abundant and complete ventilation of school and recreation rooms, of workshop and sleeping apartments, is maintained, while many children sleep on open porches. Children incapable of locomotion are transported on wheel chairs and go-carts; none are confined to the house except in case of acute illness. At all times they are under the care and supervision of a resident physician and trained nurses.

As soon as conditions permit, the children are advanced to cottages separate for boys and girls. They are thenceforward

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under the direct care of a house-mother, who is expected to maintain as far as possible, the conditions of normal home life, to inculcate habits of industry, order, cleanliness, economy, and self-reliance. An evening recreation room and a well-equipped library develop in the children the manners, tastes and customs that prevail in a well-conducted home, and they enjoy the privacy of well-furnished individual sleeping rooms.

When a child is of the proper age and its physical condition permits, it is sent to the school room. The grades correspond to those in the Philadelphia public schools, and every pupil will secure a good common school education, advancing as far as the high school grade. Possibly a few who show unusual aptitude for learning will be given a higher education.

All children receive instruction and practice in the elements of music, sight-reading, singing of songs and chorals. The better voices have been organized into a choir for the Sunday services, while some of the girls who have shown special taste and aptitude are being taught to play the piano and the organ.

A brass band of twenty-three instruments has been under instruction for two years, and has made exceptional progress.

Children showing unusual ability on any instrument or in voice receive such training as may enable them to earn a livelihood thereby.

Manual training is begun when the pupil has reached a certain advancement in the school grades, and the time allotted to it is increased each year, until finally an occupation or a trade will be selected and mastered by each student. The choice of a trade will be determined in part by the desire and inclination of the pupil himself, in part by the mental and physical abilities he has manifested during the preceding years of development, and in part by the financial remuneration to be secured. It is the object to select for each pupil that trade which will develop and employ his greatest earning capacity, provided it be not contrary to his tastes.

Classes have been already organized in sloyd, reed and raphia and bead work, caning and chair repair—the elementary manual department; but the advanced departments have yet to be established, since the school has been in operation less than three years, and the oldest pupils are but fourteen years of age.

Trades may be selected from the following: Farming, gardening, floriculture, care of poultry and stock, dairying, carpentry





Widener Memorial Industrial School  
for Crippled Children.

GATEWAY AT MAIN ENTRANCE.



Widener Memorial Industrial School  
for Crippled Children.

ONE OF THE WARDS.

and woodwork, use and care of machines and engines, operation of elevators, leather work and making of shoes, tailoring, dress-making, millinery, printing, telegraphy, stenography, library work, engraving and the domestic arts of cooking, housekeeping and laundering.

Wages will be paid to advanced students, who will then be charged for board.

A savings fund has been established to cultivate habits of thrift and economy.

Students will be graduated at about the age of twenty-one years, when it is believed they will have become wholly or partially capable of self-maintenance.

A boarding house may, in the future, be erected and maintained to assist those graduates who are only partially self-supporting, and to continue the refining and elevating influence of the School and prevent return to undesirable surroundings.

Discipline is maintained by the methods commonly employed in well-governed homes, and there is found to be no more occasion for punishment than occurs in the ordinary family under wise parental care. The children are taught the use of good language and polite manners, respect for elders and obedience to those in authority, orderliness of conduct and care of property, and a spirit of unselfishness and of helpfulness toward each other.

The principles of the Christian religion are taught, apart from any sectarianism. A form of grace is repeated in concert at the table, and the Lord's prayer on retiring at night. On Sunday afternoon a clergyman conducts a short undenominational service, which all attend. The larger boys and girls are taken on Sunday mornings, when the weather is suitable, to attend church services nearby. Roman Catholic children are privileged to attend their own church under the same conditions.

Every measure is employed to make the children happy and to afford them pleasure and recreation, as far as is consistent with their work and discipline.

They are not permitted to go home at any time; but relatives and friends may visit them on every Sunday and the first Saturday of each month from 2.00 P.M. to 4.00 P.M.

The first patients were admitted to the school in March of 1906. At the present time there are eighty-nine children, ranging from four to fifteen years of age, and comprising fifty-nine boys

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and thirty girls. There are present accommodations for not more than one hundred and twenty.

The Widener School is as yet in its infancy. It is a venture along a new line of work in many particulars, and is modeled after no institution, either in this country or in Europe. While much has been accomplished, much remains to be done, many problems to be solved, many difficulties to be overcome.

It is no easy task nor light responsibility to take a hundred and more children from their homes in early childhood, to rear and guide and train them with an affection and individual care such as exists in the well-ordered family, to maintain and educate them through many years, to bring them to noble manhood and fine womanhood, and at length to send them forth inclined and equipped to be self-supporting and useful members of society, and good citizens of the State. These are the children, in large part, who, if left unassisted, would always be dependent upon charity, either of their family, of society, or of the State.

Consequently the purposes of both economist and humanitarian are to be accomplished in this work.

Already such progress is to be observed in the physical, mental and moral development of the children of the school, that the founder and those in charge are encouraged to continue and advance the work, believing that the ultimate results will fully justify the great labor and the great cost.







